



# CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

## COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** June 17, 2008

**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers

**FROM:** City Administrator's Office

**SUBJECT:** City Council Committee On Homeless Services And Neighborhood Impacts

### RECOMMENDATION:

That Council establish a Council Committee comprised of three Councilmembers to study a range of issues related to homeless services and neighborhood impacts and, with input from community members, make recommendations to the Council on strategies to address the issues.

### DISCUSSION:

On May 13, 2008, the City Council considered a request from Councilmembers Falcone and Schneider to begin a process to develop a short-term and long-term action plan to limit and mitigate problems associated with homelessness within the City. The issues and potential strategies presented by Councilmembers Falcone and Schneider at the Council meeting included:

- Strategies to address aggressive panhandling, primarily in the Downtown;
- Strategies recommended by the Milpas Action Task Force to consider establishing a Recovery Zone or Alcohol Impact Zone in the Lower Milpas Street area;
- Strategies to utilize existing shelter services to more effectively assist the most vulnerable homeless persons;
- Strategies to increase coordination between City Police and homeless street outreach staff from various agencies to reduce calls for service from City Police;
- Strategies to gain the support of the Courts, District Attorney, and County Probation to curb negative behavior (i.e., injunctions and increased penalties) and require offenders to receive services/treatment to get on the track to recovery.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Council directed that staff return within 60 days with a proposed taskforce structure and work plan objectives to address the issues which have been identified. The initial comments at the meeting were that the taskforce should be composed of Council members, impacted businesses and members from the homeless community.

After considerable discussion among staff, we are recommending the creation of a Council Committee to work on these issues in conjunction with various stakeholders, rather than create a limited membership taskforce. Our reasons for recommending this approach are as follows:

1. A Council committee, convening meetings with various stakeholders and interested parties, would maximize community input, while still allowing the work to be done in an expedient manner.
2. The process to form a task force, and then to conduct the work of a task force, will be time-consuming and will require considerable staff support. This would be contrary to the intent of the Council's direction to focus on strategies that have potential and can be implemented quickly and efficiently in a reasonable period of time.
3. The range of issues to be studied are diverse in terms of the scope of work involved and the City staff and different community stakeholders that should be engaged in their study. Engaging the different stakeholders through a series of focus groups or meetings would be more productive.
4. All of the meetings will be publicly noticed and various interested parties will be able to attend and still provide input through out the process.

### **Committee Objectives**

With the focus on the four issue areas listed above, the recommended objectives for the Committee are as follows:

- Clarify, in more detail, the scope of the problems that are intended to be addressed within each of the five (5) issue areas;
- With support from City staff and key stakeholders from the community, brainstorm potential strategies to address the problems;
- Conduct a preliminary analysis of each of the potential strategies to identify pros and cons, the process and costs for implementation, and the identification of who would be called on to implement the strategy both initially and long-term;

- Convene forums with community members to present potential strategies and obtain feedback as to their feasibility and community acceptance; and
- With support from City staff, refine the content of each strategy and return to the City Council with recommendations for Council's consideration.

We would anticipate that the work of the Committee could be completed in approximately 120 days.

### **Staff Support**

The Committee will receive staff support from:

- Sue Gray, Community Services Supervisor - Co-Lead staff support
- Frank Mannix, Police Captain - Co-Lead staff support
- Richard Glaus, Deputy Police Chief
- Dave Gustafson, Housing and Redevelopment Manager
- Don Olson, City Special Projects Manager.

Ms. Gray and Captain Mannix will co-lead the staff team.

### **BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:**

With the scope of work for this phase of the project, Council Committee staff support costs can be covered with the approved budgets of the support staff departments.

**PREPARED BY:** Don Olson, City Special Projects Manager

**SUBMITTED BY:** James L. Armstrong, City Administrator

**APPROVED BY:** City Administrator's Office